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NEW SURVEY SHOWS AMERICANS UNDERESTIMATE ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE New Education Campaign Launches Today to Correct Misperceptions

Today, nearly half of Americans say they know someone who has Alzheimer's disease, yet 94 percent say they feel they don't know much about the disease. The Alzheimer's disease information gap is evident from the results of a new survey released today by the Alzheimer's Association. The survey found Americans don't know that Alzheimer's is fatal and many people don't understand the healthcare implications on our nation. In the face of this education need, the Alzheimer's Association today launched a first-of-its-kind initiative – the *Champions* Consumer Education Campaign – to correct misperceptions and motivate Americans to champion a cure for Alzheimer's. For details on the campaign, visit www.actionalz.org.

A Fatal Disease That Impacts Millions of Families

- Nearly nine out of 10 Americans don't know Alzheimer's disease is a leading cause of death. Further, the majority of the population does not even realize that Alzheimer's is fatal. The reality is Alzheimer's is the seventh leading cause of death in the United States.
- Someone suffering from Alzheimer's will lose the ability to form thoughts, remember simple words and ultimately communicate. Alzheimer's is a progressive disease that slowly shuts down the brain and eventually the body. One study noted that people with Alzheimer's survive about half as long as those of similar age who didn't have Alzheimer's.
- More than half of the Americans surveyed did not realize that those with Alzheimer's lose control of their bodies (49%); people die from Alzheimer's disease (58%); Alzheimer's can strike people in their 30s (58%); and Alzheimer's is a leading cause of death (87%).

A Distorted View of Reality

- Only two out of 10 Americans surveyed think it's likely they might get Alzheimer's disease in their lifetime. The reality is five million Americans suffer from the disease.
- Americans don't realize (60%) that Alzheimer's disease can strike as young as age 30. As many as 500,000 people have early onset Alzheimer's disease (those under 65 years) and other dementias.
- After age 65, one in eight will suffer from the disease. And after age 85, Alzheimer's strikes one out of every two people. Without a cure, the prevalence of Alzheimer's disease will dramatically escalate as the 78 million baby boomers age.

Hope on the Horizon

- The good news is that despite these alarming statistics, almost 61 percent of Americans surveyed remain hopeful that progress is in the works to find treatments and ultimately a cure for Alzheimer's disease in their lifetime.
- Scientists are making real progress toward treating and preventing Alzheimer's. In fact, with sufficient funding for research, new drugs may be available within three to five years that delay the progress of Alzheimer's and help limit its devastating affects. And, every day we learn more about the disease and what factors increase our risk.
- While there are no FDA-approved medications to stop the underlying degeneration of brain cells that lead to Alzheimer's disease, scientists and researchers are beginning to understand the disease process. They are also looking into promising targets for a new generation of treatments to prevent, slow or even reverse damage to nerve cells that cause this disease.

An Overwhelming Burden to the System

- Alzheimer's disease will overwhelm the nation's Medicare system in less than 25 years unless scientists find a way to prevent or cure the disease.
- Nine out of 10 Americans were unaware that by 2030 Alzheimer's will cost Medicare \$400 billion dollars – that is almost as much as the current Medicare budget.

Alzheimer's Disease is No Laughing Matter

- More than 65 percent of Americans admit to making jokes among family, friends or coworkers about forgetful people as having Alzheimer's. Further, more than one in 10 (12.2%) say they commonly joke about having Alzheimer's.
- Alzheimer's disease impacts the entire family. As the number of people diagnosed continues to grow, more people will lose someone close to them to Alzheimer's or need to provide care for a loved one with the disease. It can cost these caregivers their free time, their savings, their jobs and even their own health. The need for sensitivity in how we talk about Alzheimer's and how we relate to people living with the disease and their families will continue to become increasingly important.

Moved To *Champion* the Cause

- While only 20 percent of Americans think it's likely they may get the disease themselves, 70 percent admit they are personally concerned about Alzheimer's. And, 72 percent of people surveyed said they would be willing to participate in activities to raise funds for an Alzheimer's cure when they were presented with the facts about Alzheimer's disease.
- The new *Champions* campaign launching today offers consumers a way to move for the cause. Americans are urged to join well known faces like David Hyde Pierce, Dick Van Dyke, Victor Garber, Peter Gallagher, Lea Thompson, Olympia Dukakis, Ricki Lake and others in becoming an Alzheimer's *Champion*. These celebrities and others are raising their voices in a nationwide movement. Visitors to www.actionalz.org can view the new Alzheimer's portrait exhibit and hear their personal stories about the disease. Make a donation, purchase a *Champions* campaign tee or register to join an Alzheimer's Association Memory Walk in your area at the Web site.

Introduced in 2007, the *Champions* Consumer Campaign was created by the Alzheimer's Association, the world's leader in Alzheimer's care and research, in a national effort to dispel public misperceptions and move people to take action towards a world without Alzheimer's disease. The *Champions* Campaign includes the use of provocative advertising, celebrity involvement, public relations, online and grassroots marketing and advocacy. For more information, visit www.actionalz.org.

The Alzheimer's Association poll was conducted to measure knowledge and attitudes about Alzheimer's disease. The survey was conducted online with a random sample of 1,232 men and women aged 18+ - all members of the CyberPulse™ Advisory Panel. The Advisory Panel has been carefully selected to closely match US population demographics. Research was conducted in February 2007. The overall sampling error for this survey is +/- 3% at the 95% level of confidence.